

A
SERMON

Preach'd on the

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First of MAY, 1707.

Being the Day Appointed for a

Publick Thanksgiving

FOR THE

Happy Union of *England*
and *Scotland*.

By JOSEPH STENNETT.

L O N D O N;

Printed by J. Darby, and Sold by J. Baker at Mercers-
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By Joseph Stennett.

LONDON.

Printed by J. Smith and sold by J. Bate and J. C. Smith in the Strand M.DCC.LXX.

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JUDGES V. latter part of the 15th Ver.

*For the Divisions of Reuben there
were great Thoughts of Heart.*

AS this Day is devoted to solemn Joy and Thanksgiving for the Commencement of the Union of the Two Kingdoms of GREAT BRITAIN; it seems no less proper and seasonable to reflect on the Mischief and Danger of Division, than to look forward to the happy Consequences to be expected from a well-concerted Union: for both these Views are necessary to make us comprehend how much we owe, first to the Divine Providence, and then to the good Conduct of the Government under which we live, for giving us this Occasion of publick Rejoicing, and consequently to dispose us to obey the Call of Both, in the performance of the Dutys of Praise and Gratitude after a becoming manner.

The Text I have chosen for this purpose, is a Passage of the Song which Deborah compos'd, on occasion of the wonderful Success of Her Arms against the Canaanites.

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While She applauds the Vigour and Courage of some of the Tribes in the defence of their common Liberty, she can't forbear to take notice of the great Danger to which the State of Israel was expos'd by those Divisions, that made others of them less concern'd for the publick Interest, and less capable of serving it. For after having said, *Out of Ephraim was there a Root of them against Amalek,* Ver. 14, after thee Benjamin among thy People; out of Machir came down Governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the Pen of the Writer: And the Princes of Issachar were with Deborah, even Issachar, and also Barak, he was sent on foot into the Valley: She adds, For the Divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of Heart: Why abodest thou among the Sheepfolds, to hear the Bleatings of the Flocks? for the Divisions of Reuben there were great Searchings of Heart. Gilead abode beyond Jordan, and why did Dan remain in Ships? Ver. 16. Asher continu'd on the Sea-shore, and abode in his Breaches. Zebulun and Naphtali were a People that jeopard'd their Lives unto the Death. Tho these Reubenites were not the only Tribe that were hinder'd by their Divisions from an equal share both in the Service and Honour of that Glorious Day, celebrated in this triumphant Song; yet their Negligence and Coldness in the cause of Liberty, considering the Advantages they were under, are particularly remark'd by this Princess. Not that all the

the *Israelites* on the other side *Jordan* were negligent of the common Safety, for out of *Machir* came down *Governors*; that is, from among the *Manassues*, who inhabited *Gilead*, came some of the Heads of Families, and join'd their Troops to those of the other Tribes. Nor were all on this side *Jordan* so well affected to the Government of *Deborah*, and to the Glorious Cause in which she was engag'd, as to assist her, on this Emergency, with a Zeal becoming the occasion; for which she mildly reproves them, when she complains, *Why did Dan remain in Ships? After continu'd on the Sea-shore, &c.*

But these supine or disaffected Persons last mention'd, that inhabited some parts of *Canaan*, seem not so formidable either for their Number or Power as those beyond *Jordan*; and therefore this wise Princess reflects on their Divisions with a repeated Emphasis, as that which had extremely affected both Her and those *Israelites* who had heartily join'd in the Expedition against King *Jabin*: For the Divisions of *Reuben* (says she) there were great Thoughts of Heart.

From which Words I shall take occasion to inquire,

- I. What were these Divisions of *Reuben*.
- II. What is signify'd by the great Thoughts of Heart concerning 'em.

I. What

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I. What were these Divisions of *Reuben*. Some think the People of this Tribe were so divided among themselves, by the difference of their Opinions concerning the present Juncture of Affairs, that they cou'd come to no fix'd Resolution of falling into those good measures that were taken by the greatest part of the Tribes for the recovery of their Liberty, and for their future security from Tyranny and Oppression: That tho they had a Zeal equal to that of the other Tribes for the general Interest of *Israel*, in which their own Welfare was involv'd; yet their intestine Animositys and Disputes made 'em too regardless of the common Danger, and depriv'd 'em of an Opportunity of signalizing their Valour, equally with their Brethren, against the Great Enemy of their Country.

Others think the Divisions of *Reuben*, in the Text, signify, That this Tribe, tho united among themselves, yet was making a separate Interest from the rest; and that this unhappy Division prevented 'em from sending their Quota of Auxiliary Troops against the *Canaanitish* King, on the occasion of that Glorious Expedition of *Deborah* and *Barak*, which this Song commemorates.

Neither of these Interpretations is improbable, and I see no reason why they may not very well consist together: That they were in some sort divided

vided in their Sentiments and Conduct from the rest of the Tribes, appears by the Complaint the Prophetess makes of their *abiding in Sheepfolds*, when they shou'd have been in their Tents; and of their contenting themselves to bear the Bleatings of their Flocks, when they ought to have attended the Call of the Trumpet. And 'tis not unlikely that they were divided among themselves on this occasion, since 'tis hard to imagine that any Misunderstanding shou'd so far prejudice that numerous and warlike Tribe against their Brethren, as to make 'em all intirely negligent of their own Interest; and that they shou'd carry all their Resentments so high (whatever Offence they had taken) as to choose rather to expose themselves to the utmost Danger, than to share the Honour and Advantage of a Victory over the common Enemy. 'Tis scarce to be doubted, that a great number of the *Reubenites* were in as good a Disposition as the rest of the Tribes to make a Campaign with *Deborah* and *Barak*, in the defence of *Israel*; but their want of Unanimity, and the Feuds and Animositys that may be suppos'd to have happen'd among 'em on this account, cou'd not be so speedily extinguish'd, as to put 'em into a capacity of sending any considerable Body of Troops to the Army.

What was the occasion of the Discontent of the *Reubenites* can't easily be determin'd; whether

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ther they were not so early consulted, and their Aid so particularly importun'd in this War as they expected, as seems probable in that the Troops of Naphtali and Zebulun were first assembled, and that this occasion'd a murmuring among them, like that which afterwards happen'd among the Ephraimites against Gideon. *Why hast thou serv'd us thus* (say they)

Judg. 8. 1.

that thou didst not call us when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? and, as the Holy Text adds, they chid him sharply: And as they afterwards contended with Jephtha, on a like occasion, in very severe

Judg. 12.

1, 2, 3,
4, &c.

Terms: Wherefore didst thou pass over to fight against the Children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thy House upon thee with Fire, which Controversy rose to that height that it could not be decided without a Battel: Or whether they suppos'd the Enterprize of Deborah in making War with Jabin was too hazardous an Undertaking, and if it shou'd prove unsuccessful, likely to increase their Misery; as the Men of Succoth, with yet greater precaution, refus'd to furnish Provision for the Troops of Gideon, when in pursuit of the Midianites, lest these shou'd rally again, and the Course of Victory shou'd turn; as seems plain from their words, Are the Hands of Zeba and Zalmunna (i. e. the Kings of Midian) now in thy hands, that we shou'd give Bread to thy Army?

Whether

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Whether (I say) they were uneasy on either of these Accounts I shall not determine. 'Tis not improbable the Tribe of *Reuben* thought That Deference and Respect was not given 'em which belong'd to the eldest Tribe; and (how well soever they were satisfy'd at present with the unexceptionable Government of *Deborah*, yet) were apprehensive they might be less easy under a future Governor, and therefore were resolv'd, upon her Demise, to set up One of their own chusing; and already began to shew a Diffidence of their Brethren, not caring to be concern'd with them in any publick Affairs. And perhaps their Situation on the other side the River gave rise to some Differences about Trade and Commerce, which making their Interest often interfere with that of the other Tribes, prov'd a hindrance to their familiar Conversation; and so their want of a good Correspondence might revive that Jealousy in their Minds which they formerly conceiv'd, when they, with the *Gadites* and part of the Tribe of *Manasseh*, return'd to their Possessions, after the Conquest of *Canaan*, and the Settlement of the rest of the Tribes in that Country; and which made them fear they shou'd be treated not only as if they were a distinct Nation, but as if they profess'd a different Religion; to prevent which they erected an Altar on the Borders of *Canaan*, as a standing Testimony that they were true *Israelites*, as they declare to the rest of the Tribes,

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when

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Josh. 22.
24, &c.

when they took umbrage at that Monument.—In time to come (say they) your Children might speak unto our Children, saying, What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? for the Lord hath made Jordan a Border between us and you; ye Children of Reuben, and Children of Gad, ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your Children make our Children cease from fearing the Lord. Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an Altar, not for Burnt-Offering, nor for Sacrifice, but that it may be a Witness between us and you, and our Generations after us, that we might do the Service of the Lord before him with our Burnt-Offerings, and with our Sacrifices, and with our Peace-Offerings; that your Children may not say to our Children in time to come, ye have no part in the Lord. 'Tis not unlikely, I say, that there was a Revival of this former Jealousy in the Reubenites, and that they thought the Tribes on the other side Jordan scarce look'd on 'em as true Israelites, but as a Nation divided from 'em by their Interest and Opinions, as well as Situation; and were uneasy that a Prophetess of Mount Ephraim shou'd govern 'em, since this made 'em with regret remember the Translation of the Birth-right from them to the Sons of Joseph (as the Government was afterwards transfer'd to Judah) for thus the words of Jacob to Reuben, Gen. 49. 4. that he shou'd not excel, are explain'd 1 Chron. 5. 1, 2. For He (i. e. Reuben) was the First-born; but forasmuch as he defil'd his Father's Bed, his Birthright was given to the Sons of Joseph, the Son of Israel; and the

Judg. 4. 5.

Genealogy.

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Genealogy is not to be reckon'd after the Birthright : For Judah prevail'd above his Brethren, and of Him came the chief Ruler, but the Birthright was Joseph's. It can't be thought this cou'd be easily born, and therefore they might conclude 'twou'd be most expedient to assert their antient Sovereignty over the other Tribes, or at least declare themselves intirely independent on 'em. But after all, whether this, or any other of the things above-mention'd, occasion'd the Divisions of Reuben spoken of in this Passage of Deborah's Song, the brevity of that History will not permit us certainly to resolve; and therefore we must content our selves with such Conjectures as appear to have the greatest probability. I shall therefore proceed,

II. To consider what is signify'd by the great Thoughts of Heart occasion'd by this Division.

We may be sure all those *Israelites* who had a true Relish of Liberty, and a sincere Love to their Religion, were not a little concern'd at the Divisions of *Reuben*, and that both before and after the Conquest of the *Canaanitish* Army: for the Original will equally bear the words to be render'd, *For the Divisions of Reuben there Were*, or *there Are great Thoughts of Heart*. And 'tis not to be doubted that *Deborah*, who had nothing so much at heart as the Welfare of all her People, was extremely thought-

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ful of the evil Consequences which might attend these Breaches, and very solicitous of finding means effectually to repair them.

The Greatness of her Conquest over the Nations of Canaan, can't make her forget the unreasonable Factions of the Tribes of Israel. The Divisions of Reuben seem to abate the Joy of Victory, and now and then force a Sigh from her, even in the midst of her triumphant Song : *For the Divisions of Reuben there were great Thoughts of Heart* ; and again, *For the Divisions of Reuben great Searchings of Heart* : Expressions which sufficiently declare the Temper of the generous Soul of that Mother in Israel, who cou'd not think her self happy in her Government, till her Triumphs abroad were crown'd with Union at home.

Ehere is indeed a different turn given to these Words by Interpreters ; some render them, *In the Divisions of Reuben were great Men, and wise in Heart, or of a resolv'd Mind*. So they seem to represent that Parental Compassion with which Deborah laments their Divisions, since they had among 'em Men no less famous for their Knowledg and Wisdom, than for their Courage and Resolution ; and therefore as capable of serving the Publick in Places of Trust and Honour as the rest of the Tribes, if their Differences cou'd once be heal'd by a happy Coalition. Others interpret the words, *At the Divisions*

sions of Reuben, even of the Great Men, were Great Thoughts of Heart; that is, at the Divisions which were among the Nobles, the Statesmen, Magistrates, and the Heads of Familys, who made different Partys, and divided the common People: Or, For the Divisions of Reuben the Great Men had Thoughts of Heart; and so the Text may represent the Application of Mind with which the Greatest Men in Israel inquir'd into the true Causes of the Divisions of Reuben, when they perceiv'd the Dangers likely to ensue upon 'em, and with which they consulted a method of Union for rectifying the present Disorders, and preventing future Mischiefs, not without the earnest Recommendation, and possibly the special Commission of this wise and religious Princess; who, by the Success of her Arms, as well as by the Clemency and Moderation of her Government, was become equally the Joy of her People and the Terror of her Enemys, and much more capable of disposing the Minds of the Israelites to Union and a good Correspondence, than a less Gracious and Wise Governor cou'd be.

But seeing these Thoughts of Heart, both of Deborah and the Nobles of Israel, or those Reasonings and Debates (as some turn the word) that were among 'em, seem plainly to import the great Danger they apprehended from Division, the good Effects to be expected from a firm Union, and also the

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the great Difficulty of bringing it about; all which might well engage their Thoughts, and cause great Consultations among 'em: I shall consider,

1. The Danger of the Divisions of *Reuben*.
2. The good Consequences to be hop'd from their Union with the rest of the Tribes. And,
3. The Difficulty of accomplishing this Work.

Which, as I said before, might justly occasion great Thoughts of Heart in *Deborah*, in all the Men of Sense and Probity under her Government, and particularly in the Great Men who were her chief Counsellors, and best qualify'd for the highest Employments in that Nation.

The first thing that falls under our Consideration is the Danger of the Divisions of *Reuben*; which will appear very Great, when we consider, that besides the common Disadvantages of Contention and Division, by which Men of differing Partys are depriv'd of those good Offices which they mutually owe each other, nothing is more frequently to be observ'd, than that the Aversion which arises from the Strife of contending Communitys is easily fomented and increas'd; so that the Difficulty of extinguishing it grows in proportion to the time of its continuance. The Circumstances of *Israel* at this time render'd the Danger so much the more terrible, in that the Tribes had been long groaning under Tyranny, and one would have

have thought shou'd have learn'd so much Moderation and Prudence as to suspend their lesser Quarrels, at least while they were Companions in Misery, and bowing under the Yoke of a common Oppressor; that they shou'd have sacrific'd their civil Controversys to the publick Welfare, and united all their Forces to recover their antient Liberty, and to secure to themselves the free Exercise of their Religion. How great was the Risque they ran on this occasion, who rather chose to maintain their unreasonable Divisions, than with united Strength to attempt the stopping of that Inundation of Misery which threaten'd 'em all with equal Ruin! The Strength and Number of King Jabin's Army, who had 900 Chariots of Iron, when the *Israelites* were far from a good Posture of Defence (since, by the Testimony of *Deborah*, a Shield or Spear were scarce seen among 40000 in *Israel*) ought to have excited Judg. 5.8 these to Unanimity, as almost the only means left 'em to regain their Liberty; and yet unhappily the Breach continu'd during that hazardous War.

Nor did the Danger vanish immediately after the Overthrow of the *Canaanitish* Forces; for it was not impossible that the Tribes might use the same Vigor in destroying each other, which they had before imploy'd in vanquishing their Enemies; and *Deborah* might well foresee that glorious Victory she had obtain'd, and the consequent Time of

Peace,

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Peace and Tranquillity the Nation had in View, wou'd be so far from making 'em happy while their civil Broils continu'd, that it might rather give 'em Opportunity to sheath their Swords in the Bowels of each other, if not timely prevented by some prudent Method to reunite 'em.

And who can recount the Miserys that might have befallen *Israel*, if their Divisions had continu'd and broke out into a Civil War? What a hindrance wou'd this have been to their Commerce? What a Devastation must have ensu'd on their Frontiers? What a considerable part of their Land must have lain uncultivated? And what frequent Alarms on either side, what desolating Excursions, what Spoil and Ravage, what Cruelty and Slaughter wou'd have been the Consequence of the Continuance of this Division, may be learn'd from that dreadful Civil War which happen'd between the *Benjamites* and the rest of the *Israelites*, by which a Tribe was likely to have been cut off from *Israel*; and by the Wars between the Two and the Ten Tribes at several times, after the fatal Breach occasion'd by the Tyranny and Stupidity of *Rehoboam*.

Judg. 20.
Ch. 21. 6.

That which made their divided State threaten yet greater Calamitys, was, that the Weakness of either Party wou'd prompt 'em to call in the Aid of foreign Princes, as it happen'd to the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*; and then 'tis easy to guess what a direct Course

Course was taken even by the conquering Party to become an easy Prey to their Heathen Confederates.

However, since they were surrounded with ill Neighbours, those Pagans whom, by the Divine Appointment, they had dispossest'd of one of the most fertile and agreeable Countrys in the World; it must needs appear very dangerous for 'em to be disunited among themselves, since this might give occasion to their inveterate Enemys to attack 'em with Success, to seize their Inheritances, and carry them and their Familys into Captivity, or at least to reduce 'em to a State of Slavery, and make 'em Tributarys in their own Country.

The Danger of Division among the Tribes, not only affected their Civil, but their Religious State: For Religion is not likely to prosper, where Charity, the principal Glory and Beauty of it, is violated, and the very bond of Perfection broken. What a Scandal must the Contentions of *Israel* have been to their Heathen Neighbours! and what a Temptation to one Party, at least of the *Israelites* themselves, to apostatize to Idolatry, in complaisance to their Pagan Confederates, thereby to secure their Assistance against their Brethren; and to banish from the Minds of the People a Desire of visiting the Sanctuary of God at the solemn Anniversary Feasts, when all the Males were oblig'd to worship there! And the sacred History assures

us this was the Effect of that famous Division of the Ten Tribes from the Two in the time of Jeroboam. *how behavious grew yett and new*

When we moreover consider that the Gadites and Manassites, who had their Portion of Land with the Reubenites on the other side Jordan, were in all appearance engag'd in the same Interest with *em*, and that at least many of *em* were of their Party, this Division seems yet more terrible: for that they were a numerous and warlike People, appears by what is related of *em* on the occasion of a Battle in which they conquer'd the Hagarites. The Sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the Tribe of Manasseh, of valiant Men, Men able to bear Buckler and Sword, and to shoot with Bow, and skillfull in War, were 44760 that went out to War. And their popular Pretence to Sovereignty, by their ancient Claim of Birthright, might be suppos'd capable of drawing many weak and disaffected People even of other Tribes to their Party.

Well might such a Division as this appear formidable to Deborah, and the Elders of Israel, and make *em* think it worthy their best Thoughts and greatest Application to provide a timely Remedy against this growing Distemper, lest after the Conquest of their Enemies, the Israelites should destroy themselves for lack of Knowledge.

2 Chron.
5. 18.

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21 As the Danger and Mischief of Division, must have given Deborah, and the wisest and best of her People, many careful and uneasy Thoughts, and must have made 'em very solicitous to engage the two divided Tribes to coalesce: So the Prospect of the Blessings of Peace and Union cou'd not fail to excite 'em strictly to apply their Care and Thought, in concerting and accomplishing so good and so glorious a Design.

And here I can't better represent to you the great Advantages that wou'd certainly have accru'd to Israel by Union, than by desiring you to reflect on the Miserys already express'd that must have attended their Discord and Division: For nothing can give you a more lively Idea of the Blessings of Peace, than a genuine Description of the Calamitys of War, if you make but this one Reflection, That the latter is the very Reverse of the former.

Deborah and her Senators might well account the Reconciliation of the Tribes worthy their greatest Care and Deliberation; because they well knew the happy Consequences that wou'd attend that Union: That when Peace was within the Walls of Israel, Prosperity wou'd be in their Palaces: That this wou'd give 'em Credit and Esteem in foreign Nations, and render 'em formidable to their Enemies, who wou'd be forc'd to acknow-
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edg their Wisdom, and the great Favours of the
 Divine Providence towards 'em, in such terms as
 cut. 4. these, Surely this Great Nation is a wise and under-
 standing People; for what Nation is there so great, who
 have God so nigh unto them? &c. That this wou'd
 secure their Borders from the Invasions of the
 idolatrous Nations that surrounded 'em, who wat-
 ched for Opportunitys of sowing Discord among
 these Brethren, and of surprizing 'em with their
 Armys, when divided. That this wou'd engage
 the Protection of that God whom they worship'd,
 so that what the Psalmist speaks of Sion, wou'd
 psal. 48. be true of the Israelitish Nation in general: God is
 45, 46, 5, 6. known in her Palaces for a Refuge: For lo the Kings
 were assembled, they pass'd by together: They saw it,
 and so they marvel'd; they were troubled, and hasted a-
 way. Fear took hold upon 'em there, and Pain as of a
 Ver. 11, Woman in Travall.—Let Mount Sion rejoice, let the
 12, 13, 14 Daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.
 Walk about Sion, and go round about her, tell the Tow-
 ers thereof: Mark ye well her Bulwarks, consider her
 Palaces, that ye may tell it to the Generation following.
 For this God is our God for ever and ever, he will be
 our Guide even unto Death.

Deborah and her Nobles might well foresee that
 this Union among the Tribes wou'd soon make
 the Nation recover its ancient Vigour and Gran-
 deur, after a tedious Servitude under the Tyrant
 of

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of Canaan, and the large Expences of the late War for the Recovery of their Liberty: That the Judg. 3. Highways shou'd be no more unoccupy'd, and the Tra- 6, 7. vellers oblig'd to walk thro By-ways: That the Inhabitants of the Villages shou'd no more cease, as they had ceas'd in Israel, till Deborah arose, till she arose a Mother in Israel. That they shou'd be deliver'd from the Ver. 11. Noise of Archers in the Places of drawing Water, and there rehearse the righteous Acts of the L O R D, even the righteous Acts towards the Inhabitants of his Villages in Israel; and the People of the L O R D shou'd go down to the Gates without Fear. That Art and Commerce shou'd flourish among 'em, and that the Israelites shou'd reap the Fruit of their Industry, every one under his Vine and Figtree, and none make 'em afraid. That their Garners shou'd be full, affording all manner of Store: That their Sheep shou'd bring forth Thousands and Ten Thousands in their Streets. That their Oxen shou'd be strong to Labour; that there shou'd be no breaking in nor going out, no complaining in their Streets. Happy is the People that is in such a Case, yea happy is the People whose God is the L O R D.

They might with great pleasure foresee how much this Union wou'd conduce to the advancement of true Religion among the Tribes; the Sum of which is Love and Charity: Charity which 1 Cor. 13. suffers long, and is kind, and envys not; Charity that 4—8 vaunteth not it self, is not puff'd up, doth not behave it self

self, unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no Evil, rejoices not in Iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. That now there would be no danger of Persecution, when their Civil Interests would be the same, and all the Tribes agreed in the Substantials of Religion, and that Barbarity and Cruelty prevented, of which some of the Tribes were guilty after their Division and Apostacy in the time of Jeroboam (for Idolatry and Persecution usually go together) when even the Priests of Dan and Bethel embro'd their Hands with the innocent Blood of their Brethren, who went up to worship at Jerusalem; according to the Divine Command; of this Cruelty the Prophet Hosea seems to complain, when he says, Gilead is a City of them that work Iniquity, and is polluted with Blood. And as Troops of Robbers wait for a Man, so the Company of Priests murder in the way by Consent, for they commit Leudness. And again, when he says, — The Iniquity of Ephraim was discover'd, and the Wickedness of Samaria, for they commit Falshood, and the Thief cometh in, and the Troop of Robbers spoileth without. — They made the King glad with their Wickedness, and the Princes with their Lies. Such dreadful Consequences of Division as these shew of how great Importance it was to attempt a Union among the Tribes, and what a blessed Prospect

Hof. 6.
3, 9.

Ch. 7. 1.

Ver. 3.

pect this Prince and the Senators of Israel might have of putting an effectual bar to Persecution; a Sin contrary to the Light of Nature, as well as to the Precepts of that Religion God had reveal'd to Israel; a Crime highly provoking to God, and scandalous in the Account of all Mankind, who are not so abandon'd to their Passions as to violate the plainest Laws of Reason and Humanity.

But while the Danger of Division, and the good Effects of Union engag'd the Thoughts of Deborah and her Councils, we can't suppose that the great Difficultys attending this Work did not occur to their Minds; and, according to the words of our Text, occasion'd great Thoughts of Heart, much Thought and Contrivance, many Debates and Consultations: which is the last thing that falls under our notice from the Text, viz.

3. The Difficulty of accomplishing this great Work. How hard a Matter must it be to reconcile contending Tribes or Nations, when it often proves so difficult to unite two contending Persons! The wisest of Men observes, that a Brother offended is harder to be won than a strong City, and their Contentions are like the Bars of a Castle.

Prov. 19.

Since there is such a Variety of Tempers, and Difference of Interests among Men; since they are prone to be led by their Passions, and bias'd by a great number of Prejudices, it must appear very

very difficult to make any large Communities willing to coalesce and become one People, especially when their Fears and Suspensions of each other are risen to a great height. For in National Differences there are seldom wanting those crafty Incendiarys, who know how to aggravate Offences, heighten Jealousys, misrepresent the Words and Actions of Men in publick Employments; by these means to augment the Flame, tho sometimes under the pretence of attempting to extinguish it. And 'tis not to be imagin'd there were none of this Character among the Tribes of *Judah*, in the time of *Deborah*.

There are usually, in Affairs of this nature, so many Demands and Claims made on either side, so many Men of Influence to be satisfy'd, so many popular Pretensions to be answer'd, so many Precautions to be taken, so many Inconveniences to be prevented, and so many Nicetys to be adjusted, that to make a Union of this kind feasible at present, and durable in time to come, a Prince had need have *David's* Character, *To be wise as an Angel of God*, in order to effect it.

On these Accounts the Divisions of *Reuben* seem'd to require the Counsel of a Prophetess, and the maturest Thoughts of the *Sanhedrim* of *Israel*. Her extraordinary Piety cou'd not but prompt her to attempt a thing so much for the Honour of Religion,

gion, and for the publick Welfare; her tender Care of all the Tribes, as she was their Governor and a Mother in *Israel*, made her reflect on their Disorders with Compassion, and earnestly desire to redress 'em.

Tho the Enterprize was great and difficult, and perhaps formerly attempted in vain; yet the surprizing Success of her Troops in the Field, and her equal Administration at home; the Mildness of her Government, as well as the Terror of her Arms, might well give her hopes of succeeding. The Wisdom and Moderation of her Conduct towards all her People when she sat on the Throne of Judgment, and the Glorious Victorys she obtain'd in the Field of Battel, gave her the Hearts of the *Israelites*, and made a Reunion of the Tribes appear not altogether impracticable. Her great Wisdom cou'd not fail to direct her to imploy proper hands on so critical an occasion, and her great Piety constantly to implore the Blessing of Heaven for the accomplishment of so just, so generous, and so charitable a Design; and the Prayer of a Prophetess, and on such an occasion, was not likely to want a favourable Answer.

Yet whether this Princess had the Glory of cementing at this time the Divisions of which she complains, we have no express Account in the brief History concerning her Government. However, this

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joyful Day gives us occasion to celebrate the Success the Divine Providence has given the Queen of Great Britain, in accomplishing the Union of these Two Kingdoms, which if they had remain'd divided, threaten'd us with no less Dangers than those we have before enumerated; and now they are united, give us a no less happy Prospect than what we have been taking of the Union of the Tribes of Israel; tho our British was in danger of being obstructed by yet greater Difficultys than those I have been reciting.

If we seriously reflect on the critical Circumstances, wherein two different Nations in the same Island must necessarily be, especially if under two distinct Princes; how hard a matter it wou'd be to maintain a lasting Peace, and how easy to kindle Wars between 'em: If we consider how certainly great Calamitys wou'd attend those Wars, and how uncertain the Event of 'em wou'd be; what Alliances the weaker side might be tempted to affect, and how fatal such measures might prove to both Nations; we shall find we had lately no small occasion to apprehend that very sad Consequences wou'd attend the Division of England and Scotland, in case the latter shou'd chuse a distinct Sovereign from the other, as they might have done after the present Reign.

The History of the Wars in England during the Saxon Heptarchy, those between the Houses of

York

York and Lancaster, and those between *England and Scotland*; all shew how inconsistent it is with the Peace and Welfare of this Island to be divided into different Kingdoms.

Such a Division must needs have weakned the Protestant Interest both at Home and Abroad, and perhaps in time wou'd have overthrown the Succession of Protestant Princes to both Nations; since nothing is more apparent than that intestine Quarrels might give opportunity to some foreign Power to introduce Slavery and Popery into the whole Island.

Nor are the Advantages to be expected from this Union less obvious, than the Dangers we had to apprehend from the Continuance of Division. Who is it that sees not how much it conduces to render *Great Britain* more considerable to its Allies, and more formidable to its Enemys? that it tends to inspire all of us, who love our Liberty and Religion, with those generous Principles of Charity and Moderation, by which the publick Peace and Safety is best secur'd, and the Honour of our Holy Religion best vindicated? Her Majesty and the Parliament of both Nations, by concurring in this Act of Union, have sufficiently signify'd to the World, that the different Sentiments of Protestants in Matters of Religion, are very consistent with their living peaceably together under the same Government,

vernment, and being mutually serviceable to the Publick, according to their several Capacities and Stations.

What Advantages this Union gives us against both our intestine and foreign Enemys, 'tis easy to discern; and we hope a little time will further explain how much it will strengthen the Hands, as well as chear the Hearts of the Reform'd in other Parts of *Europe*: And who knows how much it may make way for the Re-establishment of the Reformation in those Countrys, from whence it has been extirpated by all the Methods of Treachery and Violence? By the swift and wonderful Progress of her Majesty's Arms Abroad, and the speedy accomplishment of this Union at Home, the Providence of God seems to indicate, that there is a Harvest of Glory still behind, and yet greater Deeds are to adorn her Reign, as the Reward of her Piety and Moderation, and to encourage her Majesty to imploy her Power and Interest for the Relief of those oppress'd People, who have been persecuted with the least colour of Reason, and with the utmost rigour in the World.

But I will not undertake to enumerate all the good Consequences to be hop'd from this Union. If we have but a Temper of Mind futable to so great a Blessing, there is reason to hope that the present and future Generations will call Her
Blessed;

Blessed, who has been the happy Instrument of effecting it, and that amidst a thousand Difficultys.

What was endeavour'd to no purpose in former Reigns, and so earnestly recommended by the late King *William* of Glorious Memory without effect, has been reserv'd for the present : The Difficultys attending this Great Work from the private Interests and Piques of Great Men, from the mixture of Religious and Civil Affairs, from the different Views and Prejudices of both Nations, and from the critical Circumstances of their Trade, have been all surmounted, and that in a short space of time, by the good Providence of that God (who alone can dispose Men, under such different Circumstances, to be of one Mind) by the prudent Conduct of the Queen and her Councils, and the exact Management of her Commissioners.

Thus while arbitrary Princes, who think to make all things yield to their Pleasure by Force and Violence, have often the Mortification of seeing their best Measures broken, and their well-laid Designs prove abortive ; Those who govern a Free and Generous People, according to Just and Equal Laws, have the satisfaction to find their good Designs prosper, and surmount the greatest Difficultys, while they reign in the Hearts of their People, and in all their ways acknowledg the Great G O D, both by their Prayers and Thanksgivings, that he may direct their Paths.

Aas

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As the Queen has often paid this Homage to the Almighty, and as frequently call'd on her People to join with her in the same devout Exercises; so God has on many occasions granted her *Her Heart's Desire*, and not withholden the Request of her Lips.

May the same good Providence, that has given Her the chief Honour of breaking the Chains of Europe, give her also the satisfaction of seeing its Liberty entirely secur'd, and its Peace restor'd; and the same Divine Hand, that has succeeded her in uniting her Protestant Subjects at Home, make her the Glorious Instrument of re-establishing the Reform'd Religion Abroad!

And now what remains, but that we shou'd bless the Lord with all our Souls, and with all that is within us bless his Holy Name, for the Union of England and Scotland; for the Security he has hereby given us from the Dangers we fear'd, for the hopeful Prospect of the good Consequences we have in View, and which will certainly arrive, if our Sins prevent not, by provoking the Almighty to mingle a perverse Spirit among us: for our Destruction after all this may be from our selves, or we may be all together given up into the hands of our foreign Enemys.

God forbid that we shou'd abuse so great Mercys as those we now enjoy, and provoke him to punish us after so terrible a manner: How much is
it

it to be wish'd that the charitable Temper of our Minds, and Purity of our Lives may recommend the Holy Religion we profess? How much better is it to imitate the generous and Christian Example of that Princess, who has so often recommended Moderation from the Throne, and a greater Pattern than Her's, even that of our blessed Saviour himself, who *when he was revil'd revil'd not again*, than to write after the Copy of those angry Men, who even at this happy Conjunction, which ought to have inspir'd 'em with a Disposition of Unity and Concord, have not fear'd to transgress the bounds of Decency and Justice, in traducing the Names of their Brethren to foreign Protestants?

Let us be as far from following their Maxims, as from imitating their Manners; and confute their Calumnys by a blameless Conversation, *that our own Consciences may not reproach us as long as we live: Job 27.6.* so shall their ill-contriv'd Slanders, in a little time, be no more credited Abroad, than they are regarded at Home.

It becomes us rather to mourn over the Divisions and Confusions that are in the World, whereby so many of our Fellow-Creatures are made miserable, especially to deplore the Divisions among those of the Reform'd Religion; and each of us, in our several Stations, to study the things that may make for Peace, and those whereby we may edify one another.

May

Ezek. 37.
21, 22.

May the Union that takes place this Day be never dissolv'd by our Follies and Sins! May Ephraim never more envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim! May England and Scotland be for the future as much One in Inclination and Affection, as they are oblig'd to be by their Duty and Interest; that what has been solemnly confirm'd on Earth, may be ratify'd in Heaven; and that what God has join'd together, no Man may put asunder; That this Union may be like that of Judah and Israel, predicted by Ezekiel: Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will take the Children of Israel from among the Heathen whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own Land. And I will make 'em one Nation in the Land, upon the Mountains of Israel; and one King shall be King to them all: and they shall be no more two Nations, neither shall they be divided into two Kingdoms any more at all.



FINIS.

